



Using the FamilySearch Catalog Effectively

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The Family History Library Catalog is the key that unlocks the records housed at the Family History Library including the digital collections at FamilySearch.org. These records include many birth, marriage & death records, county histories, church records, newspapers, directories, census records, and much more that will help you find information about your ancestors.

CLASS OBJECTIVE

- Understand the various searches and when to use them
- Learn how to combine searches
- Find items available at Family History Centers

THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

- To begin searching the catalog go to www.familysearch.org, click on Search and then Catalog. The information found in the catalog
 - Gives a description of each record so you can determine which records you need.
 - Provides the call number, microfilm/microfiche number, or link to a digital collection so that you can retrieve the records.
- If you click on a subject that has more than 50 titles under it, the Library Catalog will only show you the first 50. Click the Show More button at the end of the 50 titles to see 50 more titles, and so on. The catalog may be searched by:
 - Place
 - Surnames
 - Titles
 - Author
 - Subjects
 - Keywords
 - Call Number
 - Film/Fiche Number

Place Search

The Place Search is the best search for finding vital, church, and other records in the locality where an ancestor lived. When searching for localities, it is important to understand jurisdictions. Records may have been kept on a town/city, county, or state level. Search each level of jurisdiction to find records. In most of the United States, it is best to begin with the

county. Search one locality at a time. If few records appear, try searching state or county levels.

Click on the blue Places Within . . . link above the list of records to change the jurisdiction. Toggle back and forth between a state, a county and cities listed in a county.

Notes

Created in 1852 from Dakota County. In 1872 a portion of Ramsey County was added.

Part of [United States, Minnesota](#)

[Places within United States, Minnesota, Hennepin](#) ►

Choose a topic and then choose a title that interests you on the list. Then click on the blue link to see the book call number, microfilm/microfiche number, or click on the link under the Notes section to see a digital copy of the record (if one is available).

Notes

New York, Probate Records are available online, [click here](#).

Place search tips:

- Search all levels, smallest to largest (e.g. town, county, state, country; parish, county, country).
- When searching for a county in the British Isles, search with and without shire—you will get different results.
- If you can't find what you're looking for with a Place search, try using a Keywords search instead.

Surnames Search

The Surnames search is helpful for finding published family histories. A surname search works well when you have an uncommon surname. If you have a common surname, use a Surnames search with a Keywords search or try searching with just a keyword. Add a Place search to narrow down a Surnames search to a given locality.

Keywords Search

Use the Keywords search if you do not have an exact title but want to see if the Library has anything on a specific topic. If you are looking for family histories for a common surname, it is best to use a Keywords search. When using a Keywords search, type in the surname and narrow the search by adding a locality. A Keywords search will also search information mentioned in other fields such as title, author, subject, notes, etc. Use a keywords search with a place search to narrow down the number of hits you get.

Titles Search

If you have an exact title enter it in the Titles search. A Titles search will also bring up other similar titles. Many of the books in our collection are also held at other libraries. At the end of the Notes section there will be a blue link that will take you to the book in the WorldCat catalog. Add your zip code to the search and it will bring up a list of locations in your area that have the book in their collection.

[View this catalog record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations](#) 

Author Search

The Author search will help you find works by a specific author. For instance, if you know an author's name, or someone who may have contributed materials to the Library, you can enter his or her name to see what records were contributed. Searches can also be done for genealogical societies or government agencies to see what records are housed in the Library.

Subjects Search

The Subjects search uses the Library of Congress subject headings. These can be any number of topics you want to learn more about. Add a Place search to a Subjects Search to find records in a particular area. Examples of some subjects in the catalog are:

- Quakers
- Native Americans
- Civil War
- Freedmen

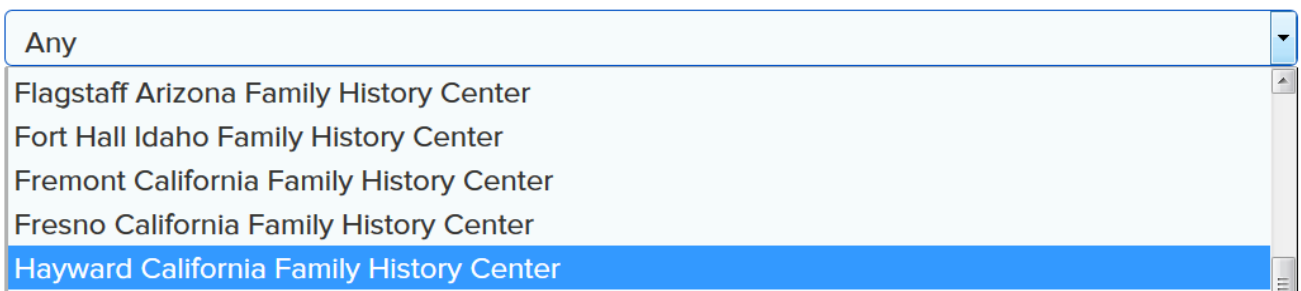
Call Number and Film/Fiche Number Searches

The catalog can also be searched for a book call number or a microfilm number. When doing a call number search use upper and lower case letters and spaces.

Search These Family History Centers

Items from many of our Family History Centers have been added to the Family History Library Catalog. Click on the drop down box under Search These Family History Centers, choose your local Family History Center, and then use any type of search to find items available there.

SEARCH THESE FAMILY HISTORY CENTERS:



A screenshot of a web-based dropdown menu. The menu is open, showing a list of family history centers. The top of the menu has a light blue header with the word "Any" and a downward arrow. Below this, there is a list of five centers: "Flagstaff Arizona Family History Center", "Fort Hall Idaho Family History Center", "Fremont California Family History Center", "Fresno California Family History Center", and "Hayward California Family History Center". The "Hayward California Family History Center" option is highlighted in a darker blue. To the right of the list is a vertical scrollbar.

Any
Flagstaff Arizona Family History Center
Fort Hall Idaho Family History Center
Fremont California Family History Center
Fresno California Family History Center
Hayward California Family History Center

Book Search (digital)

Many family history books have been digitized and are available online. Our digital book collection makes it possible for individuals all over the world to access the Family History Library collection. To use the Books search, click on Search and then Books. You can search for a surname, author, or a place or you can search with a surname and a place. Some of our books are copyrighted and can only be viewed at the Family History Library or at a Family History Center. Many can only be checked out and viewed by one person at a time.

Wiki Help

To find a Wiki page about using the FamilySearch Catalog, click on Search and then choose Wiki. In the search box enter Using the FamilySearch Catalog.

